



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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FUGITIVE DOCTOR DIPAK PATEL CONVICTED OF HEALTH CARE FRAUD

(Midland, Texas) **United States Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced today that a Midland, Texas, jury convicted **Dr. Dippakumar "Dipak" Patel** of conspiracy to commit health care fraud, health care fraud and 45 counts of mail fraud. Defendant Patel was present for jury selection, but failed to appear for trial. He is currently a fugitive from justice and was tried in absentia. The jury also convicted Patel's office manager and compliance officer, **Loretta Tarango**, of health care fraud.

At trial, the government showed that Patel fraudulently attempted to secure \$40 million from insurance companies. The actual loss was \$8.3 million, with \$7.7 million coming from tax-payer funded programs. Defendant Patel would have had to have worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to have legitimately performed the work for which he billed during one seven-month period. Patel also "upcoded" his diagnoses in order to support unnecessary testing and treatment. Medical experts testified that this unnecessary treatment could have endangered his patients.

U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton stated, "This case illustrates the importance our office places upon the detection and prosecution of those involved in defrauding our nation's health care system. While the vast majority of health care providers are dedicated and honest, unfortunately there are a few who seek to unjustly enrich themselves through fraudulent claims. As in this case, the losses can soar into the millions of dollars. We will continue to pursue those who improperly add to the strains placed upon our health care system by billing for unnecessary treatment or work not done at all."

Defendant Patel faces a maximum sentence of 265 years in prison and defendant Tarango faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. Sentencing is expected to be in about 70 days.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, The U.S. Office of Personnel Management - Inspector General, Texas Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Defense Criminal Investigation Service. It was prosecuted for the government by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Roomberg.

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